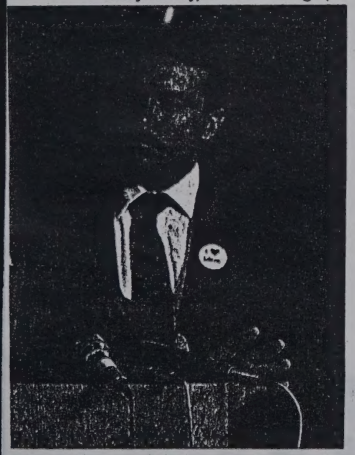
UPDATE

Mary Kelley/Gazette Telegraph



edo, officers of Colorado for Family Wednesday to kick off the group's the 1992 state ballot outlawing or gays and lesbians.

Coalition targets '92 ballot

State initiative would ban laws protecting gays

By **Dave Curtin**/Gazette Telegraph

A Colorado Springs-based coalition says it will use "a groundswell of support" to place an initiative on the 1992 state ballot that bans anti-discrimination laws for gays and lesbians.

Colorado for Family Values submitted the proposed state constitutional amendment to the Legislative Council in Denver on Wednesday.

The group will need 49,279 signatures of registered voters to put the question on the November 1992 general election ballot.

"We think gays should get no special rights," said Tony Marco, co-chairman of the group.

"It's our conviction that our civil rights laws were not intended to give protected status to sexual orientation, including homosexuality, bisexuality and lesbianism," Marco said.

"Sexual orientation is behavioral, and not a characteristic comparable to ethnicity," he said. "If having sex becomes all it takes to be considered 'ethnic' with full minority rights and privileges, the concept of ethnicity will have lost nearly all its meaning and value."

The amendment would rescind existing civil rights ordinances that outlaw discrimination against gays, Marco said. Laws were passed in Denver in 1990, Boulder in 1987 and Aspen in 1976.

Home-rule cities would not be exempt from the ban, Marco said.

"Our goal is not to arouse hatred, but in fact to extend a hand of hope to gays," Marco said. "Our opposition is not to the humanity of gays but to the granting of legal sanction and special rights to homosexual, bisexual and lesbian behavior."

The Colorado Gay and Lesbian Task Force said it considers the proposal a "serious political threat" and will rally gay and lesbian groups statewide to oppose the "bigoted initiative," said Arthur Powers, task force spokesman.

"We perceive little difference between the initiative and the laws of inequality legally forced on the Jews by the German

See **COALITION**/B3

UPDATE

Coalition/Gays call effort 'bigoted'

From B1

Nazis in the 1930s," Powers said in a prepared statement. "The gay and lesbian persons of Colorado don't seek special rights. We only seek equal rights and protections from discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations that are on par with the freedom from discrimination that everyone else enjoys."

Little is known about Colorado for Family Values, the group pushing the constitutional amendment, except for the names of its three officers. They are:

- Marco, 48, a freelance writer in Colorado Springs.
- Kevin D. Tebedo, 33, a manager at Pioneer Industrial Enterprises, a Colorado Springs wood products packing firm. He also is the oldest son of state Sen. Mary Anne Tebedo, R-Colorado Springs.
- Wilfred G. Perkins, 62, chairman of Perkins Chrysler-Plymouth in Colorado Springs.

Marco said the group has an executive board and an advisory board composed of politicians, community leaders and minorities but declined to name any members.

Perkins: Car dealership owner is one of group's officers.

Fund raising by direct mail, telemarketing and gifts is under way, Marco said. He would not reveal campaign cost estimates or the amount raised so far. The author of the proposed initiative also was not revealed.

Marco and Tebedo declined to comment on the possibility of civil rights violations if individuals were denied housing or jobs based on their sexual orientation.

"We don't want gays to be deprived of anything, but they should have no special protections," Marco said.

Organizers said the proposal was inspired by a successful effort in Denver and an unsuccessful attempt in Colorado Springs to provide anti-discrimination laws for gays. The Colorado Civil Rights Commission voted last week to urge the Legislature to extend civil rights protections to gays. Also Gov. Roy Romer ordered last winter that sexual orientation is not to be considered in hiring and firing in state government.

"We see all sorts of efforts pushing for gay rights," Marco said. "We have every right to push back."

> "We have every right to push back."
>
> **Tony Marco**

Thurs., Aug. 1, 1991 Rocky Mountain News

Statewide anti-gay drive starts

Two Springs men start petition process to bar civil rights protection for state's homosexuals

By John Sanko
Rocky Mountain News Capitol Bureau

Laws and policies protecting the civil rights of homosexuals as a class would be illegal under an amendment proposed by two Colorado Springs men yesterday.

Tony Marco and Kevin Tebedo, co-chairmen of Colorado for Family Values, said protection provided by civil rights laws should cover such items as race, color, gender, national origin or handicap — not sexual preference.

Marco, who identified himself as a writer, and Tebedo, a human-resources and marketing specialist, said at a news conference that civil rights laws "were not intended to give protected status to sexual orientation, including homosexuality, bisexuality and lesbianism." He is a son of Sen. MaryAnne Tebedo, R-Colorado Springs.

Their proposal would eliminate Denver's gay-rights ordinance, which voters upheld in May, as well as an executive order issued by Gov. Roy Romer in December. It will be on the ballot in 1992 if backers can obtain 50,000 signatures on petitions.

Romer's order barred officials in state government and higher education from discriminating in hiring, promotion, training, recruitment and appraisal based on sexual orientation.

In addition, Ignacio Rodriguez, chairman of the Colorado Civil Rights Commission, said the commission voted 4-2 last Thursday to recommend to the governor and the legislature that homosexuals be protected in areas of employment, housing and public accomodations.

"It's a very, very emotional issue and one which poses more questions than the answers we get," Rodriguez said.

About a dozen gay-rights activists attended the news conference in a capitol room that had been reserved by Sen. Tebedo. She did not attend.

Arthur Powers, spokesman for the Colorado Gay and Lesbian Task Force, said homosexuals don't want special protection, but equal rights and protection against discrimination.

Drive launched to bar gay protection laws

By Eric Anderson
Denver Post Capitol Bureau

Thurs., Aug. 1

A Colorado Springs-based group yesterday launched a petition drive aimed at amending the state constitution to bar special "protected status" for gay men, lesbians and bisexuals.

The idea's supporters said that, if the proposal is approved by state voters next year, it would override sexual-orientation protections included in Denver's civil rights law and ban any similar proposals from being offered in the state legislature.

It also could invalidate an executive order from Gov. Roy Romer that bans job discrimination against state employees on the basis of sexual orientation.

Denver officials, however, said the city's "home-rule" status would allow the protection to stand. An attempt to override the city law likely would be challenged in court.

"It's our conviction civil rights laws weren't intended to give protected status to sexual orientation, including homosexuality, bisexuality and lesbianism," said Tony Marco of Colorado for Family Values.

Marco is co-chairman of the group along with Kevin Tebedo, son of state Sen.

Please see **PETITION** on 14A

Group to fight gay-rights move

PETITION from Page 1A

Mary Anne Tebedo, R-Colorado Springs. The group needs to gather roughly 50,000 valid signatures to put the measure on the 1992 general election ballot.

Marco said civil rights traditionally have been granted on the basis of "characteristics of birth," such as race, gender or national origin, and he argued that sexual orientation doesn't fit in that category.

"If having sex becomes all it takes to be considered 'ethnic,' with full minority rights and privileges, the concept of ethnicity will have lost nearly all its meaning and value," Marco said.

Not a 'vendetta'

Marco said the group wasn't on a "vendetta" against homosexuals. Rather, he said, it is responding to several recent moves to give protected status to gays, including a failed attempt in Colorado Springs to bar discrimination against homosexuals in hiring or housing.

Homosexuals have the same civil rights protections as anyone else, Marco said, and they shouldn't receive special status because of their sexual preference.

Though the groups aren't connected, Colorado for Family Values' arguments are similar to those made by Citizens for Sensible Rights, a coalition that tried to repeal Denver's civil rights protections for homosexuals. Their proposal was defeated in Denver's May city election.

The initiative unveiled yesterday was criticized immediately by Arthur Powers of the Colorado Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and his comments suggested the proposal could spark an emotional debate around the state.

'Mailed fist beneath'

"We feel very strongly in the task force that their effort is going to probably take very much the appearance of what David Duke in Louisiana is attempting with regard to the agenda and positions of the Ku Klux Klan — a very nice, peaceable veneer with, frankly, a mailed fist beneath that veneer," Powers said.

And, contradicting Marco, he argued that sexual orientation "is a matter of how one is at birth."

George Cerrone, deputy city attorney, said Denver would fight any attempt to roll back its protections for homosexuals.

He noted that Denver is a "home-rule" city, constitutionally exempt from some state-level intervention. If the Denver ordinance were challenged, "I would anticipate that there would be a great deal of litigation," he said.

Gay rights protection targeted

Group wants statewide vote on ban

By Dave Curtin/Gazette Telegraph

A Colorado Springs-based anti-gay rights group says it will petition for a statewide initiative on the November 1992 ballot that would ban protections for gays and lesbians.

Colorado for Family Values said it will announce its plans at news conferences in Colorado Springs and Denver on Wednesday, the day it plans to file the initiative with the state.

Backers would not say whether it would be in the form of a constitutional amendment or a state law. They also would not discuss how it would affect state and local governments.

The action comes on the heels of a Colorado Civil Rights Commission vote on Thursday to urge the Legislature to extend civil rights protections to gays and lesbians in the areas of housing, employment and public accommodations. Such protections already exist for groups defined by race and religion.

The recommendation is based on testimony gathered during emotional public hearings in Colorado Springs and Denver during the past several months.

In May, Denver voters retained a law extending civil rights protections to gays and lesbians which faced a repeal effort. A month later, the Colorado Springs City Council rejected a proposed anti-discrimination law that included protections for gays.

To get on the ballot, the initiative would require 49,279 valid signatures of the state's registered voters. The group has six months to obtain the required signatures. The petitions may begin circulation by Sept. 1, said Tony Marco, co-chairman of Colorado for Family Values.

See VALUES/B3

Gazette Telegraph

July 30, 1991

Values/Vote sought

From B1

Marco and co-chairman Kevin Tebedo would not comment on the details of the proposed initiative on Monday.

Both were vocal opponents of gay rights during city and state hearings. They said then that unlike race or nationality, being gay is not a trait that merits civil rights protection.

Using law to check bias against gays in housing and jobs forces the lifestyle on others, they said.

"This is an ugly attempt to enshrine bigotry into law," said Robin Miller, chairwoman of Citizens for Human Rights in Colorado Springs. "It reflects the tortured thinking of a few individuals who feel compelled to harm our citizens who happen to be lesbian or gay."

The ballot proposal is the first of its kind in the nation, said Steve Sheldon, executive director of the California-based lobbyist True Values Coalition. Typically, his group and other anti-gay rights organizations work to repeal gay rights laws, he said.

"All Americans enjoy our constitutional rights and the Bill of Rights," Sheldon said Monday. "Homosexuals enjoy all those rights as individual citizens. This measure bans special recognition and privileges. It simply gives the voters an opportunity to vote on this and not put it in the hands of the state Legislature."

Jack Langy Marquez, director of the Colorado Civil Rights Division, said voter rejection of the proposed initiative will strengthen the hand of the civil rights commission in getting a gay rights law passed.

"If it fails, it will send a message to the Legislature that protected classification should be considered for this group," he said.

Commentary

Values group predicts gay tactics

By Tony Marco

On Aug. 31, 1991, Colorado for Family Values (CFV), a citizens' coalition, launched a statewide initiative drive to prevent gays, lesbians and bisexuals from securing for themselves the same protections and entitlements now enjoyed by African American, Hispanic and handicapped people under Colorado's civil rights laws; special rights and status that gays have pressed for five times in recent months on both state and local levels.

We expect gays to vigorously oppose CFV's initiative from now until November, 1992. How will they conduct their opposition and advance their cause? Gays have revealed their major media strategies in two homosexual magazines, Christopher Street (Vol. 8, no. 11) and Guide Magazine (November, 1987) under the title "The Overhauling of Straight America," and at greater length in the 1989 book "After the Ball."

Gay rights campaigns across the United States have adhered closely to these strategies in recent years. CFV believes they constitute a propaganda scam which, far from advancing civil rights, threatens to gain use of Colorado's governmental system as a huge "billy club" to bludgeon the rights of people who don't embrace gay behavior and rob legitimate ethnic and handicapped groups of hard-won gains and resources. CFV would like to make the public aware (of these strategies).

Here, as stated in "Overhauling," is how gay rights advocates, through a large-scale media campaign, hope "to change the image of gays" in Colorado — and how CFV will respond.

Gays will campaign to:

1) Make sure the media talk "about gays and gayness as loudly and as often as possible" so as to "desensitize the public" to "view homosexuality with indifference instead of keen emotion."

"Overhauling" cautions, however, that "the masses should not be shocked and repelled by premature exposure to homosexual behavior itself. Instead...gay rights should be reduced to an abstract social question as much as possible."

In response, CFV will talk about homosexual behavior, the primary source of gays' spurious claim to minority status; sexual behavior linked to extraordinary levels of disease and promiscuity. Surely, Colorado's citizens should know about that behavior before making a decision about giving (that behavior) the state's protection.

2) "Portray gays as victims, not as aggressive challengers" and "not demand direct support for homosexual practices, but...instead take anti-discrimination as its theme."

In response, CFV will expose gays' supposed "oppressed victim" status as bogus. Gays, according to market research and U.S. Census Bureau statistics, earn nearly $55,000 a year, $23,286 more than the national average and $43,300 more than black households where no breadwinner has a high school diploma. Sixty percent of gays are college graduates, 50 percent hold managerial or professional positions, and 65.8 frequently travel overseas.

If this is oppression, legitimate minority groups could use a piece of it. Indeed, authentic minorities stand to lose most if gays horn in on their entitlement benefits, especially funding for gays' enormously high health care needs.

"Gay-bashing" and personal misery are the only other excuses gays have for claiming ethnicity. But gays already have redress for physical assault under criminal statutes. And since when does misery alone entitle anyone to special status?

CFV will give compelling evidence that, whenever they gain or seek to gain special status, gays seem little concerned with anyone's civil rights but their own.

A gay-inspired, recently-defeated state "Ethnic Harassment Bill" would have made it a felony for a minister to criticize gays here in Colorado. In 1989, the sexual behavior of three gays in a Laguna Beach, Calif., public restroom terrified a nine-year-old boy and scandalized the community. No matter, said the city council. That behavior was protected under a gay rights ordinance. Under a similar ordinance, two Madison, Wisc., women were recently fined $1,500, forced to write apologies and then required to attend sensitivity classes taught by lesbians because they chose not to live with an active lesbian who answered their newspaper ad for a roommate.

3) "Make gays look good." Gays will advertise great, supposedly historical figures in an attempt to enhance the image of gayness.

CFV will point out that some great person's eccentric behavior doesn't offer a reason for all who share that behavior to be granted special rights.

4) Gays will use "liberal" religionists to "muddy the moral waters" by "publicizing support for gays by more moderate churches. Second, we can undermine the moral authority of homophobic churches by portraying them as antiquated backwaters, badly out of step with the times."

In response, CFV will not hesitate to expose the well-documented, ugly and unstable underside of gay life, and its victims.

5) "Make the victimizers (opponents of special status for gays) look bad." Make them look "so nasty that average Americans will want to disassociate from such types." Show them as ranting homophobes, KKKers demanding castration, neo-Nazis, etc.

CFV will disappoint gays by supplying no evidence to support these charges. We will make no attempt to roll back any existing rights gays share with everyone else. We will affirm the right of gays to live in dignity, to speak out on their own behalf and to live free from physical harm to their persons. We deplore, and will campaign vigorously to end every form of violent "gay-bashing."

That's why when the media war heats up we think Coloradans will be perceptive enough to see through

See Values, Page 5

Values

Continued from Page 1

these Machiavellian gay activist propaganda strategies. And we think a majority will support CFV's petition drive to give all people in this state the chance they deserve to vote on and decide the issue themselves.

(Marco is co-chairman of CFV, a non-profit citizens' coalition based in Colorado Springs)

And that is why, while I am opposed to abortion, I also oppose laws against abortion. Decisions regarding abortion are far too important to be left to government. No government, no law, can show enough love, compassion or concern.

Randy Van Winkle
Elizabeth

9-26-91 ■ RMN

Anti-gay forces misleading public

Spreading misinformation was a common tactic used by the Nazis in 1930s Germany, and I hope Colorado's citizens will recognize the similarities as Tony Marco and his ilk try to gain support for their ill-conceived state constitutional amendment.

Marco and his organization, Colorado for Family Values, want to deny equal rights to a significant number of Colorado citizens, and the misleading rhetoric he and his cohort, Ken Tebedo, will be using was evident in his recent letter. It's time to start pointing out the lies they are spreading, because we learned over 50 years ago that we can't sit still while bigots go about their dirty work.

First, gays, lesbians and bisexuals are not interested in gaining protection for a set of sexual behaviors. Let's be clear about that. Rather, we are simply trying to maintain protection from people who would see no problem in denying fellow citizens their jobs, housing, or, in some cases, life, simply because of their sexual orientation.

Second, bigots just love to try to scare people by categorizing homosexuality with necrophilia, bestiality and pedophilia. I'll risk stooping to Marco's level by addressing this garbage once and for all: Necrophilia concerns sexual activity with corpses. Bestiality concerns animals, and pedophilia, children. But homosexuality and bisexuality, on the other hand, concern productive relationships between free-willed, consenting adults. Surprise, the same as heterosexuality!

Hopefully, as Marco is circulating his petitions in the next few months, these clarifications will help keep some intelligent, fair-minded Coloradans from adding their names.

Joseph Marchione
Denver

■

Credit counseling saves thousands

In typical journalistic fashion, the *Rocky Mountain News*, in its Sept. 8 article on the Denver Consumer Credit Counseling Service and its director Larry Smith ("Profiting from others' debts"), attempted to cast doubt and suspicion on this man and the organization he works for instead of praising them, which is what they deserve.

DCCCS helps thousands of overobligated consumers overcome the burden of excessive debt and regain their self-esteem. Without the service, debtors would more often choose bankruptcy, where everyone loses except the attorney.

The *News* should interview some "graduates" of DCCCS and credit granters in the Denver area instead of some disgruntled former employees. It would then find out why the Denver Consumer Credit Counseling Service has earned the respect and support of our organization and many others.

Michael V. Shoop
President, Associated Collection Agencies Inc.
Wheat Ridge

Gays don't deserve special protection

Scott King, in an Aug. 29 letter to the *Rocky Mountain News* ("Double-edged sword"), seriously misrepresented the reasoning Colorado for Family Values employs in opposing special rights and protected class status for gays.

We don't oppose "gay rights" simply because, as King puts it, we feel "gayness" is a chosen behavior. CFV has stated often that society has every right to protect certain chosen behaviors as the people see fit — after full analysis of a behavior in question's merits and likely impact on the public health and welfare. (Religion, of course, is protected on this vary basis by the First Amendment.)

Whether all or some "sexual orientations" are inborn or not, society has chosen to withhold protected status from behavior modes such as bestiality, necrophilia and pedophilia — even if indulged in privately. And society is under no obligation to grant protected status to gay behavior.

That issue has already been settled by the U.S. Supreme Court, in its 1986 ruling in *Bowers vs. Harwick*. The court decided quite firmly, in the words of Chief Justice Warren Burger, not to "hold that the act of homosexual sodomy is somehow protected as a fundamental right."

In so doing, the court ruled not only that sovereign states (including Colorado) are not compelled to protect private practitioners of homosexual sodomy, but that states even have the right to maintain laws criminalizing such behavior.

CFV's initiative doesn't go that far. We simply say that Colorado's people have the right to agree with the Supreme Court, and not grant special protection to gay behavior. If Scott King disagrees, perhaps he should indeed, as his letter suggests, "start his own initiative."

Tony Marco
Co-chairman
Colorado for Family Values
Colorado Springs

RMN 9-11-91